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Imagery analysis report

**Ethiopian Offensive in the Ogaden
15 October — 11 December 1980 (S)**

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ETHIOPIAN OFFENSIVE IN THE OGADEN, [REDACTED] (S)

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1. (S/D) This report summarizes imagery-derived information relating to the Ethiopian offensive in the Ogaden region during the period [REDACTED]. The report discusses the Ethiopian occupation of Iet in the southern Ogaden and the buildup of forces and subsequent offensive in the central Ogaden.

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OVERVIEW

2. (S/D) In recent months, Ethiopia has been moving military units closer to the border in an effort to reduce Somali army and guerrilla activity in the Ogaden. Ethiopian ground force units had advanced to the town of Bermagog, approximately 20 nautical miles (nm) from the border town of Ferfer [REDACTED].

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3. (S/D) Activity observed in connection with these Ethiopian troop movements has been concentrated in two areas—in the southern Ogaden near Iet and over a large area of the central Ogaden, including the area from Dagahabor and Auareh south to Mustahil, Bermagog, and Galadi (Figure 1). In the southern Ogaden, Ethiopian forces occupied the border town of Iet and conducted limited operations into adjacent areas of Somalia during mid-October. Preparations for the offensive in the central Ogaden included the movement of ground force units from Dagahabor and Auareh to Uardere and the buildup of forces at Kabradahare during late October and early November. The offensive started in late November with forces at Uardere moving east to Galadi and forces at Kabradahare moving south through Shilabe to Bermagog.

SOUTHERN OGADEN

4. (S/D) In the southern Ogaden, Ethiopian forces occupied the border town of Iet in mid-October. [REDACTED] an arc of defensive trenching and weapons positions was present approximately 0.5 nautical mile southeast of town on the Somali side of the border. An Ethiopian unit with tanks, BTR-60 armored personnel carriers (APC), and antiaircraft artillery (AAA) was deployed within this defensive line. While vehicle tracks extended farther into Somalia, no Ethiopian units were identified beyond the arc of defensive positions at Iet. [REDACTED] these Ethiopian forces had withdrawn from Somali territory. An increasing amount of vehicle tracks were noted along the border throughout November, indicating that Ethiopian forces continue to patrol the area. These forces were probably from the brigade-sized military concentration at Bur Hosc, approximately 8 nm northwest of Iet.

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CENTRAL OGADEN

5. (S/D) In the central Ogaden, a major move of Ethiopian forces is underway. Activity relating to this move occurred in two stages. The first stage took place from mid-October through mid-November and involved the movement of a division-sized force from the Dagahabor/Auareh area to Uardere and the buildup of forces at Kabradahare. The second stage began in late November and involved the movement of Ethiopian forces toward the border. Forces from Uardere have moved east to Galadi, 30 nm west of the border, and forces from Kabradahare have moved south to at least Bermagog.

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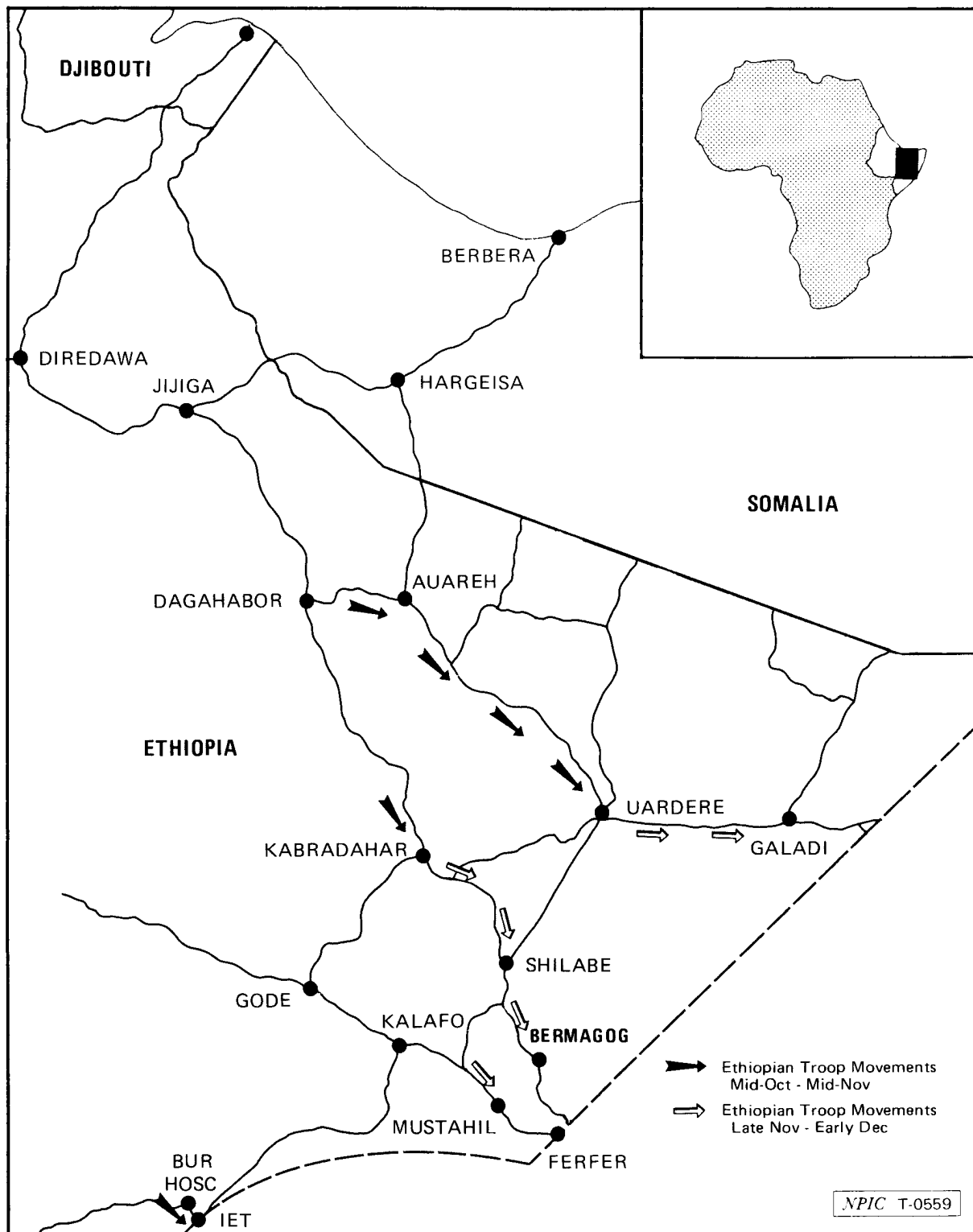


FIGURE 1. ETHIOPIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS: OGADEN REGION, OCTOBER—DECEMBER 1980

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SECRET**Preparations for the Offensive**

6. (S/D) In mid-October, the first stage of this Ethiopian troop movement began. At Auareh and Dagahabor, movement of equipment and formation of convoys was observed. Forces in these areas had departed by the end of October. [] ground forces equipment newly identified at Uardere indicated that the Ethiopian units from Dagahabor and Auareh had arrived. Units that could be identified moving into Uardere included elements of a tank battalion, a battalion of 122mm howitzers D-30 (Figure 2), and a AAA battery. Activity levels at Dagahabor and Auareh have remained low since the departure of Ethiopian forces for Uardere.

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7. (S/D) At the same time that Ethiopian forces were moving from Dagahabor/Auareh to Uardere, a buildup of forces was taking place at Kabradahare. [] more than 200 cargo trucks arrived in Kabradahare (Figure 3). [] two batteries of 122mm howitzers D-30 had also moved into the area. A convoy brought additional Ethiopian ground force units to Kabradahare [] This convoy, which had been observed forming at Dagahabor (Figure 4), contained a battalion of 130mm field guns M-46 and approximately 220 additional vehicles and pieces of equipment.

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Offensive Begins

8. (S/D) After the movement of forces into Uardere and the buildup of the garrison at Kabradahare, the Ethiopian offensive toward the Somali border began. This offensive commenced in late November and appears to be progressing along two axes with units from Uardere moving east to Galadi and units from Kabradahare moving south through Shilabe toward the border town of Ferfer.

9. (S/D) Ethiopian forces at Kabradahare were the first to move, with a tank battalion, a battalion of 130mm field guns M-46, and a battalion of 122mm howitzers D-30 leaving the area [redacted] these forces had arrived in Shilabe. [redacted] they had advanced at least as far as Bermagog (Figure 5), approximately 40 nm south of Shilabe and 20 nm north-northwest of Ferfer. At least three tanks, one battery of 122mm howitzers D-30, and 14 trucks were deployed in the area. No evidence of combat was observed in the area. All bridges along the Shilabe/Ferfer road as far south as 05-11-00N 045-05-16E (the extent of coverage) were intact. Ethiopian forces were also observed at the town of Mustahil, approximately 25 nm northwest of the border town of Ferfer [redacted]. A lack of coverage precluded a determination from imagery as to whether these forces had come from Kabradahare or the Ethiopian garrison at Kalafo.

10. (S/D) Ethiopian forces from Uardere also began to move toward the Somali border in late November. Two tank battalions, one battalion of 122mm howitzers D-30, one field artillery (FA) battery, one multiple rocket launcher (MRL) battery, and one AAA battery had departed the Uardere area [redacted]. On the same day, Ethiopian forces were initially observed moving into the town of Galadi [redacted] elements of one tank battalion had returned to Uardere. Units that could be identified in Galadi [redacted] included elements of a tank battalion, one battalion of 130mm field guns M-46, elements of one battalion of 122mm howitzers D-30, one FA battery, one MRL battery, and one AAA battery. On that same day, Ethiopian forces were involved in extensive grading of the runway of Galadi Airfield Northeast [redacted]. One HIP C helicopter was present at the field (Figure 9) and material was being stockpiled in open storage revetments. Several tents had been erected, and canvas was being used as a roofing for a number of the buildings in the area.

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